

Week of February 24, 2003: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Defensive Driving

Openers/Facts:

- Over 37,000 crashes occur in Maine annually. That's over 100 a day!
- Every year in Maine, nearly 200 people lose their lives in crashes. That's nearly 4 people killed every week!
- More than three quarters of Maine's crashes are caused by driver related factors like inattention and speeding. This means that most Maine crashes are preventable.

Monday:

Opener:

In this week's MaineDOT Flash Facts, we're going to talk about defensive driving and why it's so important. More after the break.

Flash Facts:

If you're young enough to remember taking Driver's Ed, you probably remember a lot of talk about defensive driving. That's because more than three-quarters of Maine crashes are caused by driver error. This means all those crashes could have been prevented.

Things to remember:

- It's not unusual for a driver to make multiple driving errors right before a crash. Driving too fast for conditions and not paying attention to the road are the two biggest offenders. Either operating the controls of your radio or CD player or speeding around a curve can be dangerous, and the level of danger significantly increases when both are being done simultaneously.
- Tailgating is another perennial pre-crash leader. In winter, it's especially important not to tailgate. Safety experts ask you to keep at least 4 to 5 seconds behind the car in front of you.

The MaineDOT asks you to drive defensively. The crash you prevent may be your own.

Wednesday

Opener:

Defensive driving can save your life. More after the break.

Flash Facts

In today's Flash Facts, the MaineDOT wants to remind you vehicle crashes can be devastating - even when you've done nothing wrong. That's why defensive driving is

*Prepared by:
Safety Management
Systems Management Division
Bureau of Planning
Maine Department of Transportation*

such an important habit. Even if you're a perfect driver, others aren't. Here are some tips to keep you safe:

- Watch the road well ahead of you. One thing to look out for is vehicles that may be close to or moving over the center line.
- Be especially watchful in bad winter weather, since unanticipated skids and loss of control by another driver are all too common.
- Don't expect other drivers to be perfect. Anticipate their mistakes - - it will make you a better driver.

Remember, the crash you prevent may be your own.

Friday

Opener:

Defensive driving is becoming more and more important in Maine. After the break we'll tell you why.

Flash Facts:

There are more than 100 crashes each day on Maine roads. And most of them could be prevented by defensive driving, according to the MaineDOT. A few of the easiest defenses?:

- Before you head into the intersection, make sure traffic has stopped in all directions. It's becoming more and more common to see vehicles running red lights immediately after they change - especially in larger Maine towns and cities.
- When you're going through an intersection, take your foot off the gas and hold it over the brake. This means you can react more quickly if someone else makes a mistake.
- If someone is tailgating you, pull over and let them pass. It's much less aggravating for both of you.

Don't be one of those 100 daily crashes, says the MaineDOT. Drive defensively.